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CLAIMS

1. A video card game machine (1) comprising:

5 a visual display unit (2);

a user control panel (3);

10 acceptance means (5) to receive an input payment from a player to allow the machine to be operated; and

a control unit comprising: means for directing the playing of a game by displaying, face-up and face-down, a plurality of cards; and means for changing a face down card to a face-up card; and

15 means (4) for awarding prizes;

characterised in that:

20 the control unit comprises: means for displaying, face-up with the indicia thereon visible, a first number of winning cards;

means for displaying face-up a second number of continuance cards;

25 means for displaying face-down a further number of gaming comparison cards;

means, on a player operating the control panel, to cause one of the gaming comparison cards to be displayed;

30 means for comparing the displayed comparison card with each of the winning cards;

means for indicating that a prize winning comparison has been achieved;

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means for determining a prize to be awarded on a game winning comparison being achieved;

means to deliver the prize to the player;

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means for comparing the displayed comparison card with each of the continuance cards;

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means for indicating that a game continuance comparison has been achieved;

means for indicating that at least one further free use of the gaming machine can be made without the need to provide further payment;

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means to allow such use to take place;

means for terminating the game if no further free use of the gaming machine is displayed;

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2. A video card game machine (1) as claimed in claim 1, in which the control unit comprises means to allow the player choose which gaming comparison card is to be displayed.

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3. A video card gaming machine (1) as claimed in claim 1 or 2, in which means are provided to display to the player the number of remaining free uses of the gaming machine allowed arising out of one or both of a game continuance comparison and a game winning comparison has been achieved.

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4. A video card game machine (1) as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the means to deliver the prize to the player comprises:

means to display at least two different choices of prize to the player;

means to allow the player choose the prize; and

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means to receive the choice and deliver the prize subsequently.

- 5 5. A video card gaming machine (1) as claimed in any preceding claim, in which
the means for terminating the game includes means for displaying all the
remaining face down cards.
- 10 6. A video card game machine (1) as claimed in any preceding claim, in which
the acceptance means (5) comprises one or more of:
- a keypad to accept an alpha numeric code;
- a coin/token release mechanism; and
- 15 a credit/debit card acceptor means.
7. A video card game machine as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the
acceptance means comprises means to dispense coins and/or tokens.
- 20 8. A method of operating a video card game machine comprising:
- means for directing the playing of a game by displaying face-up and
face-down a plurality of cards;
- 25 means for changing a face-down card to a face-up card; and
- means for awarding prizes;
- the method comprising:
- 30 displaying face-up with the indicia thereon visible, a first number of
winning cards;
- displaying face-up a second number of continuance cards;

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displaying face-down a further number of gaming comparison cards;

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the player causing one of the gaming comparison cards to be displayed face up; and

if one of the following events occurs, proceeding as laid out below:

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(d) the gaming comparison card matches one of the winning cards, providing a prize for the player;

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(e) the gaming comparison card matches one of the continuance cards and then allowing the player to continue the game at least one more time by causing a further game to be played; and

(f) the gaming comparison card does not match any of the displayed cards and the game is terminated.

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9. A method as claimed in claim 8, in which on providing a prize, the player is afforded the option to continue the game by causing at least one more gaming comparison card to be displayed.

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10. A method as claimed in claim 8 or 9, in which there are five winning cards and three continuance cards, with five gaming comparison cards.

11. A method as claimed in claim 8 or 9, in which there are five of each set of cards.

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12. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 11, in which when occurrence (a) arises and there are at least two comparison cards left to be played, the player is allowed have two more games.

13. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 12, in which when occurrence (a) arises, the player is given two chances to continue to play the game and a

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prize.

14. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 13, in which the player may elect to reject the prize and double a future prize if obtained.
- 5 15. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 14, in which the prize is a multiple of the amount of money paid to play the game.
- 10 16. A method as claimed in any of claims 8 to 15, in which on occurrence (a) arising, the player is afforded the option of rejecting the prize and betting the prize on winning a prize on the next play of the game, the control unit offering odds against the occurrence.
- 15 17. A method as claimed in claim 16, in which on the player electing to bet, the machine displays the odds.
18. A method as claimed in claim 12, in which the odds are randomly chosen from a database of odds.
- 20 19. A computer program comprising program instructions to cause a computer to provide the means for carrying out the invention as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7.
- 25 20. A computer program comprising program instructions for causing a computer to carry out the method of any of claims 8 to 18.
21. A computer program as claimed in claim 19 or 20, embodied in a computer memory.
- 30 22. A computer program as claimed in claim 19 or 20, embodied in a read-only memory.
23. A computer program as claimed in claim 19 or 20, carried on an electrical carrier signal.

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24. A computer program as claimed in claim 19 or 20, carried on an optical carrier
signal

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